



TI-SARANA BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

# Ti-Sarana

## NEWS

90, DUKU ROAD, SINGAPORE 429254. TEL: 6345 6741 Fax: 6348 0844  
Email: tisarana@singnet.com.sg Website: www.tisarana.org.sg

NEWSLETTER ISSUE NOV/DEC 2011

Bhante Gnanarama,  
Many Happy Returns  
to You!

- page 1

Birthday Celebrations of  
Bhante Dr. P. Gnanarama  
- Sanghika Dāna on  
26<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011 (Sat.)

- page 2

- Launch of Felicitation  
Book

Sunday Dhamma Sharing  
Sessions

Snapshots of Kaṭhina  
& Robes Offering on  
23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. 2011

- page 3

Activities of the Sunday  
Dhamma School

- Ācariya Day on  
28<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2011

- Examination  
Blessing Ceremony

- page 4

- Children's Day Celebration  
on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct. 2011

- Abhidhamma Day on Full  
Moon Day of Oct. 2011

Visit by Her Excellency, the  
High Commissioner of  
Sri Lanka

- page 5

Blessing Services at Ti-Sarana

- Wedding Blessing Service

- Wedding Anniversary &  
Birthday Blessing Service

- page 6

Welfare Activities

- Dhamma-in-Action Day

- Mettā Youth Centre

- page 7

Overnight Chanting on  
31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2011 (Sat.)

Sanghika Dāna on  
New Year's Day

Thank You to All

- page 8

## BHANTE GNANARAMA, MANY HAPPY RETURNS TO YOU!

The Editorial Team, on behalf of all members and devotees of Ti-Sarana, wish Bhante Gnanarama a very happy 80th birthday! May you have good health and long life to continue the wonderful Dhamma work you are doing for many more years to come! Bhante usually pens an article here but the Editorial Team felt we should do something different in honour of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. We decided to give our readers some personal insights into our Bhante who has been guiding Ti-Sarana for the past 18 years!

Bhante Gnanarama was born on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1931 in the Galle District, located in Southern Sri Lanka. The second of six siblings, his father was a businessman while his mother was a school teacher. When asked how Bhante became a monk, he told us that at the age of fifteen, his mother "asked" him to go and live with her brother, a monk who was a disciple of the Most Venerable Abhidhammika Welitara Paññananda Mahāthera, the Chief Incumbent of Purvārama Buddhist Temple in Colombo. Being the obedient child, he obeyed his mother and joined his uncle monk, Ven. Pategama Paññarama who became his mentor. Ven. Paññarama treated him very well and before long Bhante heard the calling of the noble vocation and received his novice ordination. He received his higher ordination in 1956. Meantime, Bhante continued with his academic studies and in 1961, he graduated from the University of Ceylon, then the only university in Sri Lanka, now known as The University of Peradeniya. Five years later he obtained the Bachelor of Arts, Honours Degree from the University of London. In 1968 he successfully completed the Master of Arts Degree Course at the University of Sri Jayawardhanapura. Later, in 1986 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University of Magadha for his doctoral research in Buddhist Studies.

It was in 1993 that Ti-Sarana first invited Bhante Gnanarama to Singapore. He was here to establish the Buddhist and Pali College of Singapore, an affiliate of the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. More importantly for us, he became our Chief Religious Advisor and has served in that role ever since. Our members and devotees would probably know of his numerous academic achievements and work but he has also devoted much time to Ti-Sarana's religious activities. We are certain that he has touched our members and devotees' lives either through his many Dhamma talks, religious rites or countless blessings. All of us would also know of his humble demeanour and in particular his thoughtful concern and caring ways. It is with this in mind that we have put together a few personal anecdotes for you.

Sister Sumanā writes – "Bhante Gnanarama's devotion to spreading the Dhamma and his concern for his students and devotees as well as his care towards those who are sick and less fortunate have my highest admiration. Not many people are aware that more than 10 years ago, he established the Isura Children's Home in Colombo which takes in abandoned babies and children. This and many other acts of kindness done without fanfare are purely from the goodness and compassion of his heart."

(Continued on page 2)

*(continued from page 1)*

Brother Upali notes – “Ven. Gnanarama has devoted most of his time with Ti-Sarana since he came to Singapore in 1993. In so far as I can recall, for the last 18 years, he spent his annual Vassāna at TBA except in 2010 when he went back to spend the Vassāna at his temple in Colombo. Some of his devotees there had made a special request for him to spend Vassāna with them as he had been away for so long and they missed him. How fortunate we are at Ti-Sarana!”

Brother Khemaka remembers – “It was some years ago that Rosie was at TBA one weekday night and Bhante Gnanarama enquired on how was her health. Upon being told that she was not feeling well, Bhante spontaneously took a bottle of our blessed water and recited a special chant before giving it to her. It was very touching moment for both of us.”

Brother Ivan recalls – “It was a particularly trying time for me when my father passed away 9 years ago and I remember Bhante’s kind assistance rendered during the Marananussati services for my late father. I am grateful that Bhante took the trouble to explain and guide me through the difficult period. Bhante also patiently accompanied me and my mother on the boat trip out to sea to scatter my father’s ashes”.

All of us at Ti-Sarana are able to attest to Bhante’s eminent qualities. However what is most noteworthy was that in 2009, even Bhante’s peers honoured him for his many contributions to Buddhist studies when he was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Literature (Honoris Causa) by the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka.

To conclude, the Editorial Team would like to thank Bhante for his dedicated service at Ti-Sarana and wish him many more years of good health and happiness to continue his noble mission.

## **Birthday Celebrations of Bhante Dr. P. Gnanarama**

### **Saṅghika Dāna on 26<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011 (Sat.)**

Ti-Sarana Dhamma Community and the Buddhist and Pali College Alumni will be holding a Saṅghika Dāna on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2011 (Sat.) at our premises to celebrate Bhante Dr. P. Gnanarama’s birthday. Venerables from other Buddhist organizations in Singapore will be invited to partake in the Saṅghika Dāna.

All members and devotees are invited to participate and rejoice with Bhante Gnanarama. We look forward to your presence.

#### **Programme on 26<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011, Sat.**

- 9.00 am Arrival of Mahāsaṅgha and Guests
- 9.15 am Welcome Address by President, Ti-Sarana Buddhist Association
- 9.20 am Jaya Maṅgala Gātha by Ti-Sarana Dhamma School
- 9.30 am Special Address by Mahāsaṅgha
- 9.40 am Appreciation by Buddhist & Pali College Alumni
- 9.45 am Voices of Ti-Sarana Dhamma School
- 9.55 am Introduction of the Felicitation Book
- 10.05 am Appreciation by Ti-Sarana Dhamma School
- 10.10 am His Blessed Journey – A video and photo montage
- 10.30 am Recitation of Maṅgala Sutta
- 10.40 am Happy Birthday to Bhante Gnanarama
- 10.50 am Dedication to Bhante Gnanarama
- 11.00 am Buddha Pūjā
- 11.30 am Saṅghika Dāna
- 11.35 am Vegetarian Lunch for guests and devotees

## Launch of Felicitation Book

A Felicitation Book will be published to celebrate Bhante Dr. P. Gnanarama's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. We like to thank all who have assisted in the compilation of this Book, the eminent scholars and Venerables who contributed their articles, the Publication Team, the Proofreaders, and especially the Editors, Ven. Dr. Rangama Chandawimala Thera and Prof. Chandima Wijebandara with their team of artwork and graphic designers. The Felicitation Book will be launched on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2011 (Sun.) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. A group of members will leave Singapore on 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec. 2011 to attend the book launch.

### "One good turn deserves another"

This is an English proverb

"If a person performs a meritorious deed, he should do it again and again; he should find pleasure therein: blissful is the accumulation of merits."

Dhammapada 118

## Sunday Dhamma Sharing Sessions

Bro. Wilson Ang will share with us his thoughts on the following Sundays at 12.30 pm:

- 27<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011 My Awakening
- 11<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2011 Strengthening the Dhamma Practice
- 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2011 The Next Step

## Snapshots of Kaṭhina and Robes Offering on 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. 2011



*Kaṭhina Procession*



*Offering Kaṭhina Cloth to Mahāsaṅgha*



*Offering of Vassāvāsika Robes*



*Offering Dāna (breakfast) to Mahāsaṅgha*



*Offering robes*



*Members and devotees cutting the Kaṭhina Cloth*



*Buddha Pūjā*



*Conferment of Buddhist name*



*Preceptors with their Buddhist Name Certificate*



*Offering Kaṭhina Cīvara (Robe) to Bhante*



*Transference of merits to all departed beings*

# ACTIVITIES OF THE SUNDAY DHAMMA SCHOOL

## Ācariya Day on 28<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2011

We wish to say a very big thank you to our greatest Teacher, the Buddha. We really appreciate Him who gave us the most precious Triple Gem. With the Triple Gem, we gained a lot of wisdom, peace and happiness. We hope that all beings may one day attain the highest bliss – “Nibbāna”.

We would like to say a big thank you to our Bhantes and our Dhamma class teachers for their dedication and for steering us on to the right path.

As a student, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of learning the Dhamma - the greatest legacy left by the Buddha to us. The Dhamma is our guide to become better people by teaching us right thoughts and right actions. As a parent we are our children's first teacher. Children will mirror parents' thoughts and actions to the slightest detail so it is immensely critical that we learn and practise the Dhamma well and be a good role model for them.

We wish all our Bhantes and volunteer teachers a Happy Ācariya (Teachers') Day!

Chris Neo and Family



*Dedications to our Teachers*



*Paying respect to our Bhantes*



*Bro. Khemaka presented a gift to each of our revered Teachers*



*Some of our Teachers*



*A token gift for Teacher Mettā and Teacher Jasmine*



*Happy Ācariya Day!*

## Examination Blessing Ceremony

Many parents came with their children for the Special Blessing on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 2011 to instil confidence in them and encourage them to prepare well for the examinations.



*Invitation to Bhantes to conduct Blessing Ceremony*



*Students with their parents*



*Blessings from Bhante*



*Tying the Blessed Thread*

# ACTIVITIES OF THE SUNDAY DHAMMA SCHOOL

## Children's Day Celebration on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct. 2011



*A quiet moment*



*Start of celebration*



*Bhante's advice to the children*



*Receiving a gift from Bhante Gnanarama*



*A gift from Bhante Ananda*



*This is our cake!*



*Enthralled audience*



*I'm part of the magic show*

## Abhidhamma Day on Full Moon Day of Oct. 2011



*Offering of light by Bhantes at Relic Chamber*



*Bhante explaining the significance of the occasion*



*Abhidhamma chanting and sharing of merits*



*Meditation*

## Visit by Her Excellency, the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka

On 6<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2011, Her Excellency, Mrs. Ferial Ismail Ashraff, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka and her staff visited Ti-Sarana. Members of the Management Committee were present to share our Dhamma and welfare activities with the visitors.



*Greetings from all*



*Getting to know each other*



*At the Relic Chamber*



*Guests with Management Committee*



*Signing the Visitors' Book*



*Reading the write-up on Mettā Youth Centre*

# BLESSING SERVICES AT TI-SARANA

## Wedding Blessing Service

Our heartiest congratulations to Sis. Josephine Chia and Bro. Jonathan Teo who came for their Wedding Blessing on 17<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2011.



*Offering of flowers*



*Offering of fruits*



*Chanting of Suttas by Bhantes*



*Blessing by Bhante*



*A gift from Bhante*



*Signing the Wedding Book*



*Tying the blessed thread*



*A photo with Bhantes*

## Wedding Anniversary & Birthday Blessing Service

Our congratulations to the happy couples, Bro. Asoka Song & Sis. Sunitā Tay and Bro. Wilson Ang & Sis. Betty Teo. They celebrated their wedding anniversaries by giving dāna to the Bhantes. Friends of the couple took the opportunity to present them with a cake and wished them many more happy anniversaries to come.

Friends of Bro. Jotiya Wong and Bro. Hemanta Yeo also gathered at Ti-Sarana to celebrate their birthdays.



*Bro. Asoka Song and Sis. Sunitā Tay*



*Bro. Wilson Ang and Sis. Betty Teo celebrating their wedding anniversary*



*A blessed thread for Bro. Hemanta*



*It's Bro. Jotiya's birthday and he celebrated by giving dāna*



*Dāna by Bro. Hemanta*

# WELFARE ACTIVITIES

## Dhamma-In-Action Day

On 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2011, 26 members and devotees armed with grocery items and supermarket shopping vouchers visited about 100 under-privileged families in the Marine Parade area.



*Briefing by Bro. Hemanta*



*Bags of grocery items*



*Loading the items*



*This is heavy!*



*Ready to visit the families*

## Mettā Youth Centre

On 24<sup>th</sup> September two volunteers went to Sri Lanka to conduct a two-week enrichment programme for the children at Mettā Youth Centre. The older girls were taught to bake cookies by Sis. Subodhā Evelyn Tan. Time was also set aside to guide the girls in their English lessons based on their school text books.



*Learning to read the recipe in English*



*Hands on in baking the cookies*



*Waiting to offer the cookies to the elderly at a Home*



*Preparing a card to present the cookies to friends at Ti-Sarana*



*Pep talk by Sis. Subodhā*



*Reading their English text books*



*Cycling with Sis Subodhā*



*Outing on Children's Day*



*MYC band waiting to perform at a function*



*We competed and won 3<sup>rd</sup> prize at the function*

## Overnight Chanting on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2011 (Sat.)

To usher in the New Year 2012, we will be holding the annual overnight chanting on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2011 (Sat.). Our resident Bhantes together with the guest Venerables from Sri Lanka will recite Suttas and Parittas to bless all members, devotees and their families for a peaceful, happy and fulfilling year in 2012.

The names of members and devotees who requested to be blessed will be read out before the commencement of the overnight chanting. Enclosed in this newsletter is the form "Special Blessing for the Year 2012". Please complete the form and submit it to the Hon. Treasurer by 25<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

Do come for the overnight chanting on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2011 and be blessed.

### Programme on New Year's Eve (31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2011, Sat.)

- 6.30 pm Evening Pūjā
- 7.00 pm Gilanapaccaya for Venerables
- 7.05 pm Light refreshment for members and devotees
- 7.20 pm Invitation of Sacred Buddha Relic to the Shrine Hall
- 8.30 pm Reading the names of members and devotees for Special Blessing
- 9.15 pm till
- 5.30 am Overnight chanting of Suttas and Parittas by Venerables
- 5.45 am Blessing for members and devotees by Venerables

## Saṅghika Dāna on New Year's Day

We will be offering Saṅghika Dāna (breakfast) and lunch to the Venerables on 1<sup>st</sup> Jan. 2012 (New Year's Day). All members and devotees are encouraged to come and offer Dāna to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Mahāsaṅgha for conducting the overnight blessing service for us.

### Programme on New Year's Day (1<sup>st</sup> Jan. 2012. Sun.)

- 7.30 am Buddha Pūjā
- 7.45 am Breakfast for the Mahāsaṅgha
- 11.00 am Buddha Pūjā
- 11.30 am Saṅghika Dāna for Mahāsaṅgha
- 11.45 am Vegetarian lunch for members and devotees
- 6.30 pm Evening Pūjā

## Thank You to All

The Management Committee wish to thank all members and devotees who provided the interest free loans and those who contributed generously to the Saṅgha Abode Fund when we first appealed for donations in 2006 to buy the apartment unit 04-01 at 75 Duku Road. We are very grateful to them as we have now fully repaid the interest free loans. May the Blessings of the Triple Gem be with them and their families!

We also like to thank all our Bhantes for the spiritual guidance and support, the dedicated volunteer teachers of the Sunday Dhamma School, the Dāna Chefs who conscientiously dish out their favourite food for all to savour, the various sub-committee members and all members and devotees who have contributed their time and effort in making Ti-Sarana a conducive place to learn and practise the Dhamma.

We look forward to your continued support and participation in the coming year 2012. We welcome more involvement and support in our Dhamma and Welfare activities. Please approach any one of our committee members to register your interest in our activities.

**Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama Mahāthera,**  
**Ven. W. Ratanasiri Mahāthera,**  
**Ven. R. Ānanda Thera and the Management Committee**  
**wish all Members and Devotees A Very Blessed and Happy New Year 2012!**